

Applying for Conservation Programs



Applications for AMA, CSP, and EQIP are accepted by NRCS on a continuous basis throughout the year with periodic cutoff dates to evaluate, rank, and prioritize applicants. See Program Application Dates and Deadlines.

Applications may be submitted in person, scanned and e-mailed (must include signature), faxed or mailed to their local USDA Service Centers. Application forms are available at your local [USDA Service Center](#) or from our Pennsylvania NRCS website. People are encouraged to apply early to increase likelihood of being offered a contract.

Applicants must be able to show they have control of the land for the life of the contract. For rented or leased land, a simple form is available to document this. Financial assistance eligibility is contingent on not starting the practice before having an approved contract.

NRCS Administered Conservation Programs

AMA Agricultural Management Assistance Program

CSP Conservation Stewardship Program

EQIP Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Eligibility Documentation



Eligibility criteria for entering into a Conservation Program

Contract (CPC) are established by Congress in the Farm Bill and vary by conservation program. The specific requirements can be found by visiting your local NRCS field office and a summary is also posted on the NRCS web site under "[Programs](#)". It is the applicant's responsibility to submit the required documentation.

Basic Requirements

Applicants must have control of the land for the term of the proposed contract. "Control" is defined as possession of the land by ownership, written lease, or other legal agreement.

- Applicants must comply with the provisions for protecting the interests of the tenants, which includes the provisions for sharing payments. Before any tenant can be excluded from a contract, written consent must be obtained.
- AMA, CSP, and EQIP applicants must be engaged in agricultural production (including forestry) or have an interest in the agricultural operation associated with the land being offered for enrollment.
- For an entity, such as a family owned business or non-profit, the applicant must have the legal authority to act on behalf of the entity. The CCC-901A or CCC-902 will identify which member (s) may sign on behalf of the entity. If the entity would like a non-member to sign on its behalf, then a Power of Attorney using form FSA-211 be completed to authorize a person to act on the entity's behalf. All members of the entity must individually be eligible to participate.

Definitions

Applicant	An individual or entity that completes the application paperwork and identifies land to be enrolled in the program. The IRS identification number provided by the applicant is used to establish eligibility and generate IRS-1099s for the contract.
Individual	An individual who controls the enrolled land and uses their personal social security number (SSN) to apply for conservation program assistance.
Entity	Any partnership, corporation (limited liability or other), joint venture, estate, trust, or non-profit association or group that controls the enrolled land and uses an employer identification number (EIN) or tax identification number (TIN) to apply for conservation program assistance.

Application Forms

Applications are available online at USDA [Service Center Agencies eForms](#), at your local USDA [Service Center](#), can request they be sent to you by calling your local [USDA Service Center](#), or can be downloaded from this site.

The NRCS-CPA-1200 is used to apply for AMA, CSP, and EQIP. The appendices for application vary by program.

The following are links to the various PROGRAM applications with their respective appendix.

[EQIP application](#): (Fillable Without Appendix)

[RCPP-EQIP application](#): (Fillable With Appendix)

[CSP application](#): (Fillable With Appendix)

[RCPP-CSP application](#): (Fillable With Appendix)

[AMA application](#): (Fillable With Appendix)

Click below to download a fillable version of the Conservation Program Application (NRCS-CPA-1200 form) (Without appendix)

[NRCS-CPA-](#)

[1200](#) (Oct 2021)

AMA, CSP, EQIP - Conservation Program Application

Fillable

Other Forms

- [AD-1026](#) - Applicants for all programs except AMA must complete and file with USDA Farm Service Agency a *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification* if one is not already on file for the current crop year.

- [CCC-941](#) - Applicants may be required to complete an Average Adjusted Gross Income Certification and consent to Disclosure of Tax Information. USDA conservation programs exclude from eligibility for conservation programs, applicants who have an average annual adjusted gross income (AGI) greater than \$900,000 for the three tax years preceding the application fiscal year. This is effective for new Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) participants in Fiscal Year 2014, and for other NRCS conservation programs beginning in Fiscal Year 2015, which begins October 1, 2014.
- [CCC-901](#) - For all entities, a Member's Information CCC-901A form is needed to identify the members of the entity and the percent of ownership of each member. Copies of original legal documents for the applicant must accompany these forms, providing supporting documentation for the entity. (This requirement can be met if applicants have a current CCC-901 or CCC-902 on file with the USDA).
- [CCC-902](#) - Farm Operating Plan for an Entity Form, CCC-902 may be required by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to determine the applicant eligibility for some program payments. Applications for NRCS administered programs may substitute a current CCC-902 instead of the CCC-901. Original legal documents for the applicant must accompany these forms, providing supporting documentation for their farming operation.
 - [CCC902-i](#) - for an Individual Person
 - [CCC902-e](#) - for a Corporation, General Partnership, Limited Partnership, Joint Venture, or other Entity
- [FSA-211](#) - Power of Attorney - Approved format for program participants to designate someone as having POA to sign conservation program documents such as applications, contracts, and payment requests on their behalf.
- [SF-1199a](#) - A Direct Deposit Sign-up Form with electronic funds transfer information is required to establish the vendor record and ensure the correct name and tax ID have been used. All USDA program payments are made through direct deposit. This form is not required at the time when submitting an application, but is required before funding can be approved for an application.
- Applicants may also be asked to verify their status using IRS tax records if they self-certify as a Beginning Farmer or a Limited Resource Farmer. For more information please go to this website: <http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

Summary of Application Steps

1. The applicant will:
 - Indicate interest in one or more programs and funding categories
 - Complete the program application form and all eligibility documentation and submit to NRCS.
2. USDA completes an initial evaluation of the land and determines the resource concerns with the eligible applicant. This may include NRCS visits to the property or applicant visits to the USDA office to discuss alternatives and program requirements. Any applicant who does not own the enrolled land will also be required to obtain the landowner's written concurrence to apply for permanent or structural practices.
3. If the application ranks high enough to be considered for funding, the applicant will be asked to confirm interest in proceeding.
4. USDA develops a draft conservation plan, and a proposed Schedule of Operations including proposed payments, and finalizes the program application package. The applicant reviews, makes corrections to and signs the final program application package. Only limited changes to the

application will be allowed after this point, so it is important for the applicant to be fully engaged in this step.

5. USDA selects final applications for contracting based on available funding.
6. The applicant and USDA complete contract documents. The applicant should be aware of all contract terms, requirements and penalties for non-compliance before signing. After NRCS signature, the applicant may begin installing the contracted practices.
7. Once an application is funded, the applicant must continue to meet Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions throughout the contract period in order to receive program payments. (AMA does not have this requirement)